High School Elections Ambassador Program Toolkit

A Guide to
High School Voter Registration

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Highlights

Mission

The goal of the **High School Elections Ambassador Program** is to train civic minded students interested in working as a crucial link between the Elections Department and their peers to

- encourage young people to become engaged in the election process,
- pre-register and register high school students to vote, and
- recruit student poll workers for upcoming elections.

What's Involved

This program is meant to be a fun and creative way to encourage other young people to think about voting. As such, it is up to each ambassador to gear their outreach event(s) toward themselves and their school.

As an Elections Ambassador you will be asked to:

- Attend a training
- Make an outreach plan, or utilize one already established by prior ambassadors at your school
- Employ the support from others on campus
- Host an outreach event
- Provide feedback to the Elections Department when finished

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Outreach Event

Step 1: Organizing

You will have been trained by the Marin County Elections Department on the basics of registration and voting. You will also have been provided with materials as a resource for you when you plan your drive.

Make a Plan

Before you get approval from the school, be prepared with a plan of action. You will want to present your ideas to faculty members and potential sponsoring groups. Be ready with:

- Objectives- The High School Ambassador Program mission is to:
  - encourage young people to become engaged in the election process,
  - pre-register and register high school students to vote, and
  - recruit student poll workers for upcoming elections.
- Methods- How are you planning to accomplish this mission? Potential ways are:
  - **Tabling:** set up a table during break or lunch, during club rush or homecoming week, at sports games and other extra circular events on campus
  - **Class/assembly presentation**: coordinate with teachers to briefly explain the importance of voting, answer basic voting questions, and register/pre-register students during class
  - **Online:** Use social media and the school's website to encourage students to register and provide information about the process
- Dates/Time/Place- When and where will you hold your registration event(s)?
  - Recognize the established timeframe of the Ambassador Program and plan your event accordingly
  - Consider possible school events that may coincide: club rush, homecoming week, sports games, theatre events, etc.

Start to think about:

- Execution/logistics- What do you need to carry-out your outreach event(s)?
- Completion- How will you measure success of the event(s) and how will you provide this information to the Marin County Elections Department?

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Who to Contact

If your school does not already have a faculty member involved, look for an adult advocate who will act as an advisor and provide support.

1. Secure a passionate faculty sponsor for help. Having adult aid will be beneficial when getting permission to table or promote the program. This effort should be student-led, adult-supported.
2. Consider reaching out to your student body leaders. Having the support from an established group like ASB would be helpful to publicize the event.

Think outside the box when organizing or seeking support. Consider a drama, art, language teacher or group not necessarily related to voting, anyone you think would want to get involved.

Step 2: Preparing the Drive

Once you have gotten approval from the school and picked your outreach method(s) and date(s), start to make decisions about how to carry out your event(s).

How to Advertise

It is important to get the message out about your event(s), so make sure to use multiple advertising methods.

- Social Media: advertise your outreach event(s) using your social media and ask the school or other groups on campus to share details on theirs
- Flyers: Hang flyers and posters provided by the Elections Department and create your own
- Word-of-mouth: Get the message out by telling your friends and asking them to share the message.
- Faculty: Ask your teacher sponsor to share the message with their classes and with other faculty members to share with their students.
- PA System: Get permission from school administrators to briefly share the event details during the daily intercom announcements

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Step 3: Execution

Before Your Event

It is important you understand the rules about holding a registration drive before you have your event. The California Secretary of State has a Guide to Voter Registration Drives that has helpful tips and guidelines regarding Election Code. Additionally, it may be helpful to review the CA Voter Bill of Rights. Find useful information here:

- Guide to Voter Registration Drive: https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/publications-and-resources/guide-vr-drives/

- Voter Bill of Rights Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1KtWJ4oMlcI&feature=youtu.be

Some important things to note:

- Completed paper registration forms must be submitted to the registrar's office <u>within three business days</u> after your event
    - You can mail them or bring them to the Elections Department
- The Ambassador Program is run by a **non-partisan office**, and therefore the ambassadors are expected to **remain non-partisan** as well
- There are no eligibility requirements in California for volunteering to register others to vote. However, if you help someone fill out an affidavit of registration, you do have to fill in your information and sign the affidavit in the spaces provided
- Registration incentives are prohibited under election code unless they are given to everyone, including those who choose not to register
- If you have volunteers helping you, make sure they are properly trained and know the rules as well.

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During Your Event

On the day of, make sure you have everything you need for a successful event:

- Have your supplies ready. Potential things to have on hand:
  - Tables
  - Chairs
  - Paper voter registration forms
  - School Chrome books/laptops for online registration and signing up voters for WheresMyBallot?
  - Clipboards
  - Pens (blue/black)
  - Poster/banner to advertise the event
  - Give-away items
- Encourage these three steps
  1. Register/pre-register to vote
  2. Sign up for WheresMyBallot?
  3. Vote
- Check the forms for completion
  - Must have:
    - Checked the appropriate boxes indicating eligibility to vote
    - Full name
    - Date of Birth
    - Identification (if not provided on form, may be required when first voting)
    - Residence address
    - Signature
- Remember to remain nonpartisan and give a form to anyone who asks for one
- Remind students it is optional to register/pre-register to vote, not everyone is eligible

Political Parties

These are the qualified political parties in California. You can provide the link for more information about the parties if there are questions.

https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/political-parties/party-statements/

- American Independent
- Democratic Party
- Green Party
- Libertarian Party

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- Peace and Freedom Party
- Republican Party

"Independent" is not a political party affiliation in California, No Party Preference means that you are not affiliated with any political party.

Step 4: Completion

Post Event

Once your event is over, you will provide feedback about how your event went. Contact information is provided at the end.

- Deliver the voter registration forms to the Marin County Elections Department or put them in the mail **within three business days** after your event.
- Provide feedback to the Elections Department about your outreach numbers- the good, the bad, and what we can do to improve the program for future ambassadors. Contact mstone@marincounty.org.
  - Based off the number of completed forms you have, people who registered online, and people who came to the table or attended your event, make an estimate about how many people you reached. Record these numbers to report to the Elections Department.
  - Share any photos or videos from your event:
    - Please complete and return the photo/video release form included in your orientation packet if you are featured in any photos/videos
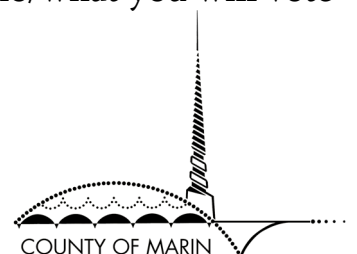
Voting FAQ's

Here are answers to common questions about registering to vote and voting.

Why should I vote?

- Your vote is your voice. Voting is an opportunity to have your voice be heard by those who represent you. It can have a direct impact on you and your community.
- Young people make up a large portion of the voting-eligible population, yet historically turn out in lower numbers. This means the youth vote is a powerful political force and has the potential to sway elections. Every vote matters.

Why should I register to vote?

You cannot vote if you don't register. Even if you haven't decided who/what you will vote for, you should register to be ready to vote when the time comes.

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Who can register to vote in California?

To register in California, you must be:
- A United States citizen and a resident of California,
- 18 years old or older on Election Day,
- Not currently in state or federal prison or on parole for the conviction of a felony, and
- Not currently found mentally incompetent to vote by a court.

I am not old enough to vote. Why pre-register?

Pre-registering allows you to vote as soon as you turn 18. Pre-registering at 16 or 17 engages you in the electoral process even before you can vote. Studies show young voters are more likely to vote when eligible if included early on.

Voting behavior is habit-forming. If you vote, you will likely keep voting.

What do I need to register or pre-register to vote?

To identify yourself, the voter registration form asks for either your:
- California Driver's License number,
- California I.D. number, or
- the last four digits of your Social Security Number

You may leave this blank if you do not have any of these identification methods.

Do I need to show identification before I vote?

In most cases, California voters are not required to show identification before voting. First time voters in a federal election may be required to show ID before voting if you did not include any identification information on your voter registration.

It is a good idea to bring identification with you when you vote for the first time. A poll worker may ask to see your identification if you mailed your voter registration application and did not include your driver license number, California identification number, or the last four digits of your Social Security number.

If you vote-by-mail and need to provide ID, be sure to send a photocopy of some personal identification in the envelope with your ballot.

How do I register or pre-register to vote?

- Online: Go to registertovote.ca.gov
- Paper:
  - Download and print the National Voter Registration Application Form here: https://www.eac.gov/voters/national-mail-voter-registration-form

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- You can also pick up a form at the Marin County Elections Department or at most libraries, city halls, and post offices
- DMV:
  - The National Voter Registration Act (NVRA), also known as Motor Voter, requires Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) offices to provide an opportunity to register to vote to people applying for or renewing a driver license or identification card.

I may already be registered. How can I check?
- You can check your registration status using The Voter Information Portal (VIP) at marincounty.org, or at voterstatus.sos.ca.gov
- If you are under 18, check on your status by contacting the Marin County Elections Department
  - by phone at (415) 473-6456
  - or by email Elections@marincounty.org

You can always re-register without penalty if you are unsure.

I am going to college in a different state. Where should I register?
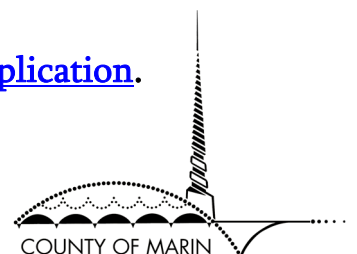You have a few options:
- To vote on Marin County issues, register to vote by mail in Marin County:
  - your ballot will be sent to your address in Marin and a parent or guardian can forward the ballot to you, or
  - you can list your Marin address as your residence address and list your college address as your mailing address so your ballot will be sent directly to you.
- If you want to register at your college address, check the state's voting requirements. You may need to establish residency for a certain amount of time before you can vote in that state.

Can I register if I am studying or living abroad?
Yes. Whether you are already registered or not,
- go to registertovote.ca.gov and click register to vote,
  - when promoted, select 'A U.S. citizen residing outside the U.S. temporarily' or whichever one applies to you,
  - list your Marin County address as your residence address and your overseas address in the mailing field.
    - *Note: if you decide to have your ballot emailed to you, you must still list an overseas mailing address.
- If you prefer paper, you may also use the Federal Post Card Application.

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What do I do if I change my name, address, or political party affiliation?

- If any of these change, simply re-register. You can do so online at registertovote.ca.gov or just fill out a new form.
- Make sure to register early, the CA voter registration deadline is 15 days before the election.

What if I miss the registration deadline, can I still vote?

Yes, Conditional Voter Registration allows voters to register and vote at the same time once the registration deadline has passed. You can do this in person at your polling place or at the Marin County Elections Department.

Do I need to pick a party when I register to vote?

- No. If you want to register without a political party preference, check the box that states "No Party Preference."
- There is no party called "independent" in California, No Party Preference means that you are not affiliated with any political party.
- For more information about No Party Preference visit https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/political-parties/no-party-preference/

Do I have to vote for everything on the ballot?

- No. Just vote for what you want, and those choices will be counted.

Where do I find information about what will be on my ballot?

- The Elections Department will send you a county Voter Information Guide about 40 days before the election.
- This booklet gives you information about the election
  - where to vote (your polling place),
  - how to vote-by-mail,
  - the correct way to mark your ballot,
  - information about local candidates and measures,
  - and includes a sample ballot (a copy of the official ballot)
- The CA Secretary of State's office will send you a state Voter Information Guide about 40 days before any statewide election
  - This book gives you information about state candidates and propositions

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Resources

Script Templates:

- PA: "Did you know in California 16 and 17 year-olds can pre-register to vote? On (date of drive) we will be holding a voter registration drive in (location) at (time). If you are 16 or older, make sure you come prepared with your California ID number, Driver's License number, or last four digits of your Social Security Number. Your voice and your vote matter, it only takes a few minutes to register. See you there!"
- To Teachers: "Hi, Mr./Ms. _____. We are working to pre-register and register all our eligible students to vote. Can you set aside 15-20 minutes during the week of _____ for our team to visit your classroom to conduct voter registration? We will talk about why voting is important, then walk students through the steps to register."

"I Pledge to Use My Voice" Cards

- English: https://www.tolerance.org/sites/default/files/2018-10/Voting-and-Voices-A-Pledge-English.pdf
- Spanish: https://www.tolerance.org/sites/default/files/2018-10/Voto-y-Voces-Uno-Promesa.pdf

Register to Vote Online Cards

- https://elections.cdn.sos.ca.gov/outreach/posters/reg-day-flyer-final-4.pdf

Pre-Register to Vote Flyer

- https://elections.cdn.sos.ca.gov/pdfs/back-to-school/pre-register-form.pdf

Where's My Ballot Application

- https://california.ballottrax.net/voter/

Student Poll Worker Application

- https://www.marincounty.org/-/media/files/departments/rv/poll-workers/student_app.pdf?la=en

CA Student Mock Election

- https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/student-mock-election/

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Important Election Deadlines

- ➢ **September 24, 2020:** Voter Information Guides start to be mailed out
- ➢ **October 5, 2020:** Vote-by-Mail ballots start to be mailed out/ Vote-by-Mail ballots can be issued at the Elections Department
- ➢ **October 6, 2020:** Vote-by-Mail Ballot Drop Boxes available throughout Marin County
- ➢ **October 19, 2020:** Voter Registration deadline
- ➢ **October 20, 2020:** Conditional Voter Registration and same day voting begins at the Elections Department
- ➢ **October 27, 2020:** Last day to apply for a vote-by-mail ballot to be mailed (voters can still pick up a ballot at the Elections Department)
- ➢ **October 31, 2020:** Polling places open (open from October 31-November 3)/ Conditional Voter Registration and same day voting available at polling places
- ➢ **November 3, 2020:** Election Day

Contact Information

The Marin County Elections Department
3501 Civic Center Drive, Room 121
San Rafael, CA 94903

Mailing Address
PO Box E
San Rafael, CA 94913-3904
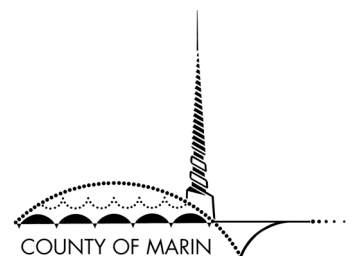
Elections Department
Megan Stone
Elections Technician
(415) 473-6444 or (415)473-6456
mstone@marincounty.org

League of Women Voters
Youth Outreach Sub-committee
youthambassadors@marinlwv.org

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Works Cited

- California Secretary of State
  https://www.sos.ca.gov/

- FairVote: Voter Pre-Registration
  https://www.fairvote.org/voter_pre_registration

- LOWV's Youth Voter Movement
  Macy Bartlett Alexander Hamilton Senior High School in Los Angeles
  https://youthvotermovement.org/wp-content/uploads/Voter-Registration-Toolkit.pdf

- Santa Clara County Office of Education
  https://www.sccoe.org/news/featured/Pages/Toolkit---High-School-Voters-Education-Weeks.aspx

- Teaching Tolerance Article by Deyanira Aldana and Julia Delacroix
  "I Pledge to Use My Voice" Card
  English: https://www.tolerance.org/sites/default/files/2018-10/Voting-and-Voices-A-Pledge-English.pdf
  Spanish: https://www.tolerance.org/sites/default/files/2018-10/Voto-y-Voces-Uno-Promesa.pdf

- When We All Vote: Script
  https://www.whenweallvote.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/01152020_MSV_Voter_Registration_Script.pdf

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